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FACULTY PROFILE

JAMES QUINN

Professor James Quinn may be another example at Bridgewater of a “local boy” going off to pursue his career, only to return home to become a highly respected member of the faculty. Professor Quinn was born and raised in Rockland, Massachusetts. His mother was a proud graduate of Bridgewater State College and a long time classroom teacher. While attending Boston University Professor Quinn began to follow his dream of acting. During the 1980s he balanced his day job at John Hancock Insurance with a range of acting roles in the Boston theater scene. His acting talents were recognized with three Boston Critic Awards for *A Midsummer Nights Dream*, *the Fifth of July* and *Guys and Dolls*.

After graduating from Boston University Professor Quinn switched his attention to directing and developing new works. He was accepted into the prestigious Yale Drama School, where he received a Master in Fine Arts while working at the Yale Repertory Theater. It was at this stage in his life that fate turned him back to his roots. Professor Quinn saw a job opening at Bridgewater State College for the Children’s Theater Director and decided that working with young people and for young people was an opportunity that he could not pass up. Ever since Professor Quinn made that decision, Bridgewater State College has been the richer.

In the seven years that Professor Quinn has been at Bridgewater he has become a driving force for Children’s Theater not just at the College but also throughout southeastern Massachusetts. During the year, besides his normal teaching responsibilities, Professor Quinn conceives and co-authors one original Children’s Theater play. Beginning in the Fall term Professor Quinn asks his students to work with him to do the research and formulate a concept around which the play will develop. He then collaborates with a local writer and a musician to develop the dialogue and the music

of the play based on this research. This process has led to six plays that have brought thousands of young people to the College in March of each year. Professor Quinn is currently working on a Children’s Theater production using Homer’s *Odyssey* as the basic concept and theme.

The children’s plays that Professor Quinn puts on at Bridgewater are not just for entertainment purposes. With elementary teachers in Massachusetts ever conscious of testing and teaching in light of established content frameworks, Professor Quinn develops his Children’s Theater plays with the instructional needs of the school systems in the region in mind. Moreover, Professor Quinn is at work as the arts consultant to local school systems (with the North River Collaborative) to help teachers improve their offerings and bring more arts programming into the schools. His work with local school systems evolved out of a summer program called Arts for Youth that he founded and now runs, which brings young people to the College for two three-week sessions for a range of multi-arts classes. As a result of his commitment to producing art for young people, Professor Quinn has become an invaluable resource in southeastern Massachusetts for the arts, especially at a time when schools are cutting back on such programs and concentrating on core subject matter.

Despite an ambitious list of accomplishments, Professor Quinn has new dreams for theater at Bridgewater. As Chair of the Youth Division of the New England Theater Conference, Professor Quinn would like to present the winning play of the NETC’s annual children’s playwriting contest, here at Bridgewater State. He would also like to produce a more ambitious schedule of plays for young audiences by developing a subscription series that would utilize the College as a center of theater in the southeastern Massachusetts. Professor Quinn envisions bringing companies such as The Theater of the Deaf and other well known touring groups to Bridgewater, and continuing his successful collaboration with other artists/teachers interested in working with young people.

Professor Quinn is clearly a visionary who sees his position as Children’s Theater Director as a means of building new arts “bridges” to the communities that the College serves. Not only the College but the region is fortunate that Professor Quinn decided to come home to provide the energy and the skill for an ever-growing number of children’s arts programs.